

Judge Broome, Judge Hudson are recipients of Chief Justice Awards

July 2, 2015

Rankin County Court Judge Thomas H. Broome and Jurist in Residence John N. Hudson are recipients of this year's Chief Justice Award for their work improving the juvenile justice system.

Mississippi Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. will present the awards on July 10 during the Mississippi Bar Convention in Sandestin, Fla. The annual award recognizes individuals whose work has improved the judicial system.



Judge Thomas Broome

Retired Court of Appeals Judge Larry Roberts, the third recipient of the 2015 Chief Justice Award, was presented the award on June 25 during his retirement ceremony in Jackson.

Judges Broome and Hudson are to be honored for “tireless work to ensure the safety and well-being of children.” They have worked together and separately to bring about juvenile justice reform. Both have served in state and national leadership positions. Chief Justice Waller noted that their “outstanding leadership has improved the juvenile justice system.”

Judge Broome has served as County Court and Youth Court Judge for Rankin County since 2003. He is recognized as a powerhouse of ideas and energy. In July 2013 he was elected as a trustee for the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. In 2012, he became vice-chair of the Juvenile Detention and Alternatives Task Force. He is chair of the Mississippi Council of Youth Court Judges and co-chairman of the Mississippi Commission on Children's Justice, where he also chairs a subcommittee which has focused on the Youth Court system. He is chair of the Parent Representation Committee, which is working to develop a program to provide legal representation for low income parents whose children come into the custody of the Youth Courts and the Department of Human Services. Rankin County Youth Court is one of four pilot sites for parent representation.



Jurist in Residence John Hudson

The Supreme Court appointed Judge Broome to the Task Force for the Development of Uniform Youth Court Rules of Procedure. Gov. Haley Barbour appointed him to the Mississippi Statewide Advisory Group for Juvenile Justice, where he is the co-chairman of the Legislation Committee. Gov. Phil Bryant appointed him as Vice Chair of the Mississippi Children's Justice Act Task Force and also as Chair of the Legal Sub-Committee on the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Blue Ribbon Task Force, which is part of the Healthy Teens for a Better Mississippi Program. A former State Superintendent of Education appointed him to participate in development of the charter Statewide Dropout Prevention Plan.

Judge Broome founded the Rankin County Juvenile Drug Court in 2006, the fourth juvenile drug court in the state. He serves on the State Drug Court Advisory Committee. Judge Broome began work in 2009 to address the recurring scenario of abused and neglected children who started out in foster care and returned to the court system as delinquents. In 2010, he started one of two pilot family drug court programs in the state. The program deals with juveniles, parents and their extended families to address drug and alcohol problems that are the underlying causes of abuse and neglect, delinquency, domestic strife, crime and other problems. In 2012, Rankin County Youth Court became one of four pilot programs which provide free legal representation to low-income parents in Youth Court. He is working with Forrest County Court Judge Michael McPhail to help establish a Zero to Three Safe Babies Court Team for Rankin County, with plans to expand statewide.

Judge Hudson, of Natchez, became the state's first Jurist in Residence April 1. He retired in December 2014 after 31 years as Adams County Court and Youth Court Judge. He was at that time the state's longest serving County Court judge, having been appointed Aug. 3, 1983. His job as Jurist in Residence is to assist Youth Courts across the state in dealing with abused, neglected and delinquent children. He serves as a mentor, helps with training in best practices, and works to locate and access community and other resources to assist Youth Courts.

Judge Hudson has been a leader in efforts to improve the state's juvenile justice system and the lives of all the state's children. He created the state's first juvenile drug court in 2001, two years after the drug court movement began in Mississippi. He started the state's first pilot family drug court in 2010. He served on the State Drug Court Advisory Committee.

Judge Hudson worked extensively on proposals for uniform county courts in the 1990s. He has contributed significantly to renewed efforts to create a statewide county court system that would provide uniform services to children in all areas of the state. He acts as the advocate before the Mississippi Legislature, particularly on issues involving mental health, abuse, neglect, and delinquency.

Since 2012, Judge Hudson has served as chair of the Juvenile Detention and Alternatives Task Force, which works to find alternatives to juvenile detention, formulate recommendations for licensing standards for juvenile detention facilities, and find funding sources to improve juvenile programs. He is a member of the Parent Representation Committee, and he supervised the Adams County Youth Court's participation in the parent representation pilot program. He has taken leadership roles in the Coalition of Children and Youth, the Mississippi Conference of County Court Judges, the Mississippi Council of Youth Court Judges and the Adams County Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse. He has implemented numerous programs to assist the Youth Court and the community, including the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program in 1991; the Adolescent Offender Program, which provides delinquent youth with an alternative from training school; and the Pendleton Therapeutic Group Home for Adolescent Boys. He secured numerous grants which paid for Adams County programs in delinquency prevention, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, and other programs to assist children and families.

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